A Study of the Hero in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: The Second Courtship of the Coward Wentworth

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Introduction

This study explores the characterization of Frederick Wentworth in Jane Austen's last finished and posthumous work, *Persuasion* (*P*, 1818). All of Austen's novels, *Northanger Abbey* (*NA*, 1818), *Sense and Sensibility* (*SS*, 1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (*PP,* 1813), *Mansfield Park* (*MP*, 1814), *Emma* (*E*, 1815) and *Persuasion* are set among "3 or 4 Families in a Country Village" (Le Faye 275). This provides the best material for Austen, who says, "I must keep to my own style & go on in my own Way" (Ibid. 312). All of Austen's heroines are unmarried young women, and the stories develop their self-recognition or self-discovery through various experiences, leading to marriage with their beloved men. Austen has immeasurable skill and compares her own novels to "the little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush" (Ibid. 323), and gives each heroine and story distinctiveness, while sticking to her own principles.

It goes without saying that a great number of studies have been made of Jane Austen, for example, how her morals and manners are based on the conservative faith of the late eighteenth-century, inherited from "her favorite moral writers" (H. Austen 7) such as Samuel Johnson (1709-84), her senses of irony or humour, and her skill in such writing techniques as realism or free indirect speech. It is quite surprising that there is little criticism focused on Austen's heroes. They are indispensable for the heroines and for the plot in Austen's novels. In particular, marriage can not be arranged unless the heroes propose and the heroines accept. In fact, studies of Austen's heroes have been increasing recently. What seems to be lacking, however, is a systematic study of how Austen characterizes each hero.

It is true that all of Austen's heroes are ideal husbands for the heroines in their internals and externals. Walter Allen points out they are like Sir Charles Grandison, created by Samuel Richardson (1753-54), "a perfect gentleman" (*OED*) (Allen 105). Further, critics like Richard Simpson or Patricia Menon who find 'mentor-lover'

relationships between Austen's heroes and heroines in the traditional style of eighteenth-century novels, think of the heroes as the mentors of the heroines' self-recognition. Audrey Hawkridge discusses the male characters and provides interesting speculations, however, the main subject is about the description of male characters as influenced by Austen's real life. *Persuasions* (1996) issued by Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA) includes some instructive conference papers on the subject of "Jane Austen and Her Men," but they give no systematic papers. Reeta Sahney argues on the characterizations of Austen's male characters from a view of "social milieu" (Sahney xvii), and Michael Kramp takes up the masculinity of Austen's men in connection with sexual identity and gender relationships. They both regard Austen's heroes as uniform only in the realm of sociological studies. Are heroes stereotyped and conventional ideal men who only assist heroines in achieving maturity and marriage?

All the Austen's heroes have unique characters, and their encounters or relationships with the heroines are different. To explain the characterization of heroes, it would be helpful to compare something common among them, that is, courtship and marriage with the heroines. Austen's six novels show only a few scenes after marriage. In other words, Austen depicts the process of the heroes' courtship up to marriage. Because the marriage of the heroines is the main theme of Austen's novels, a considerable number of critics argue from various opinions. As Austen herself observed very truly, "Single Women have a dreadful propensity for being poor－which is one very strong argument in favour of Matrimony" (Le Faye 332). Marriage was the means of livelihood for women at that time. However, heroes do not always hunt for their wife at random. They describe their ideal women or view of marriage, praise the heroine, express their feelings and display incomprehensible behaviour. We can find various depictions of the heroes' courtship processes, above all, dancing and letter writing, with some attendant social conventions. More noteworthy is that there is one thing in common among the three, that is, only men can propose to women. Austen, who avoids "Improbable" (Ibid. 278) or "false representation" (Ibid. 269), can incorporate them perfectly into novels and establish intimate relationships between men and women in public.

In Austen's age, balls and dances were an important opportunity "of society and courtship, allowing young people to mingle with the opposite sex in a controlled environment, displaying their charms to potential marriage partners" (Olsen 195). Some critics like Darrell Mansell, Stuart M. Tave and Mary Basson, relate these scenes to plot, actual rituals and characters.[1)] Austen, who took part in balls and dances herself, surely knows about the actual circumstances or rules of dance. For that reason,

1) Mansell states that "Her novels are more like ballroom dances than like anyone's conception of life in the raw. They present the relationship between the sexes in a graceful, restrained and highly stylized form of art that has developed in polite society" (Mansell 8). For the discussion of Tave, see his *Some Words of Jane Austen* (33-5).

Allison Thompson or Vivien Jones recognize her accurate descriptions in the novels to reflect the feelings or relationships of the involved parties. Of all others, the important point to notice is the similarity between dance and courtship: "Austen includes dances in her novels to catalyze courtship, and she choreographs her ballroom scenes skillfully to prefigure her proposals of marriage" (Stovel 1). However, Timothy Dow Adams or Langdon Elsbree, who treat dance extensively, point out the focus on only heroine's dance or feelings towards maturity or marriage. They regard the heroes' proposal or behaviour uniformly as a mark of their concerns for the heroines, and neglect Austen's diverse and deft descriptions of dancing, which are used effectively as a means of courtships according to each hero and scene.

The same may be said of letter writing. Correspondence follows rules based on social conventions such as praiseworthy form, style and content. Austen exchanged many letters with family or relatives who lived abroad or far away, especially her older sister, Cassandra, so she must have known these rules very well. Although Austen abandoned the epistolary form, which was a fashion in the eighteenth-century, "she does not stop testing and re-evaluating the personal letter. In every one of her finished novels it is there, playing a crucial, often decisive role, as if it were a character in its own right" (Favret 137). It will be clear from this extract how Austen makes use of letters in each novel. The role of letters is expressed by Lloyd W. Brown: "The true art of letter writing is not simply a communicative technique. It is also a complex experience of feeling and insights, through which individual perception and human relationships are defined" (Brown 167). The expressive function of a letter is not only the content to inform but also the relationship between sender and receiver. Especially, "Men and women who were not engaged were forbidden by custom to send letters to each other" (Day 199). It is true that some engaged couples corresponded, and men and women who exchange letters are suspected of being engaged in six novels.

Persuasion has little humour or irony compared Austen's other five novels. As Austen wrote to her niece, Fanny, "You may *perhaps* like the Heroine, as she is almost too good for me" (Le Faye 335), Anne Elliot is a sensible and mature heroine. On the other hand, the fact that "her bloom had vanished early" (*P*, Ch. 1) shows that her twenty-seven years are past the marriageable age. The story is about her reunion and reconciliation with the hero, Frederick Wentworth, who was in love with Anne eight years ago, and the recovery of Anne's attractiveness and their ultimate marriage. Many critics have noticed the peculiar languid autumn atmosphere and related it to the aging Austen's sensitivity, resignation and "romance" (*P*, Ch. 4) as Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) states (Woolf 152). Wentworth is introduced as a naval Captain who is "a remarkably fine young man, with a great deal of intelligence, spirit and brilliancy" (*P,* Ch. 4) but with an uncertain future. Throughout the novel, the narrator emphasizes "his sanguine temper, and fearlessness of mind" (*P*, Ch. 4) in contrast to

the reserved Edward Ferrars and somber Colonel Brandon (*SS*). It has been established that we can see Austen's admiration for and support of the navy and her broad world view on the social order or naval prosperity from her characterization of him. Ironically, this is exactly the key factor in Lady Russell persuading Anne to reject Wentworth's proposal.

However, we ought to investigate a different side of Wentworth's character, cowardice, in the process of his courtship towards Anne. It may be useful to look carefully at the important features of his relationship with dance and letter writing. In chapter I, we shall discuss Austen's intentional elimination of the hero's dancing from *Persuasion*. Henry Tilney (*NA*) and Darcy Fitzwilliam (*PP*) ask to dance again and again in order to sound out each heroine, Catherine Morland and Elizabeth Bennet, and convey their feelings. Some balls are also held in *Persuasion*. However, although Wentworth and Anne are present together, he dances with other women, but we can not find any dance scenes between the protagonists. Here, it is useful to present a quote about the function and representation of dance in Austen's novels: "In none of the novels does Jane Austen devote her attention to the details of dancing per se. Rather, she is interested in the occasion for the dance, the people involved, and the events that result" (Elsbree 115). What the passage makes clear is that Austen concentrates on the relationships between her characters and dancing. She avoids deliberately depicting Wentworth's dance. However, we should not overlook some skillful analogies of dance with courtship in *Persuasion*, like touching the hand or walking. It is as if Wentworth and Anne cultivate their private relationships in public. Wentworth is deeply involved in dance, though he does not dance with Anne. We will consider the reason why Wentworth does not dance with Anne and Austen's effective means of characterizing the hero.

Chapter II concentrates on Wentworth's letter. He writes a letter suddenly to convey his innermost feeling and slips it to Anne covertly at the time when he is not engaged to her. The notable thing is that the form and way of presenting the letter is greatly different from public letters. We may say that this is an exceptional act against the rules for exchanging of letters between men and women at that time. In addition, we can read in the content of it and his attitude about writing in detail. This is what Brown has to say about his letter writing: "Letter writing coincides with, and represents, the dramatic intensification of emotional and moral conflicts: . . . Captain Wentworth's explosive proposal of marriage to Anne Elliot" (Brown 156-7). The letter is utilized as the exhibition of the hero's intense feelings towards the heroine. What is Austen's intent in making Wentworth, who can talk to Anne directly, write the letter? We should examine the effect of his courtship process connecting with the past in this peculiar scene.

The purpose of chapter III is to identify Wentworth's new aspect with special emphasis on his second proposal to Anne. This is, as it were, a fresh start for him, who

was rejected once. What is the difference between the two? A characteristic of the second is his gradual advance; to put it another way, he can not propose marriage to Anne until he gives her a letter in advance. This negative attitude contradicts his sanguinity or bravery and demonstrates his cowardice. Just as Austen in fact comments, "Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without Affection" (Le Faye 280), Wentworth also must express his sincere feelings when he propose marriage. Moreover, Austen affirms "Marriage is a great Improver" (Ibid. 153), namely, his courtship is accomplished when Austen admits that the hero and heroine are right for each other. It means that Wentworth not only has unchangeable love towards Anne, but also achieves improvement. We will discuss the characterization of Wentworth through his fixed notion of strong character and his experience of two courtships.

I. The Analogy of Dance

After parting from Anne, Wentworth returns from the war with a "handsome fortune" (*P*, Ch. 4) and the rank of Captain. It is proved that he is a man of action who succeeds by himself. The narrator tells us his emotion at the time when he meets again with Anne:

> He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill; deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity. (*P*, Ch. 7)

Because Wentworth has immovable confidence and sticks to his own strength, he can not approve of Anne's feeble attitude when she refused his proposal through Lady Russell's persuasion, in spite of now having "some natural sensation of curiosity" about her (*P*, Ch. 7). Laurence Lerner is among those who observes this respect and regards Wentworth as "the most headstrong" (Lerner 168) and as a result, attractive man among Austen's heroes. Viewed in this light, the obstinacy is a distinctive feature in Wentworth's character and the main cause of his being fettered by the past.

As hinted in "The evening ended with dancing" (*P*, Ch. 8), a private impromptu ball is held once in *Persuasion*. Although Wentworth and Anne are there together, he does not ask her to dance, and she charges herself with performance on the pianoforte. Because the protagonists do not dance, the study of dance of this novel is unsatisfactory so far. Critics only take up, in particular, Anne's pitiable situation. Elsbree considers the dance and ball as the solitary heroine's "withdrawal" (Elsbree 122) from her life and argues they are of no great important difference from Austen's former works. However, we must draw attention to the relationship between Wentworth and dance. As the fact that Anne "was sure of his having asked his

partner whether Miss Elliot never danced?" (*P*, Ch. 8) shows, Wentworth is interested in her. It will be clear from this extract, ". . . no one seemed in higher spirits than Captain Wentworth" (*P*, Ch. 8) that he can not be compared with others in vivacity at the ball, and moreover, "his partner" proves clearly that he dances with another woman, not Anne. Shortly afterward, when Wentworth and Anne accidentally approach each other, he offers his seat immediately to her with "studied politeness" (*P*, Ch. 8) and never sits again. Wentworth deliberately shuns contact with her. His behaviour at the ball mirrors his stubborn rejection of Anne, namely, his acute interest and excessive adherence to the habit that he can not follow ordinary social rules.

Amy M. King astutely points out the peculiar depictions of Wentworth and Anne, the relationship of their physical contact and courtship.

> A large proportion of *Persuasion* is given over to a negative courtship plot between Wentworth and Anne; barely speaking, they nevertheless form a part of an intimate party that throws them repeatedly together. This improbable second intimacy leads to a series of physical encounters between the two, none of which could be said to form part of a recognizable dance of courtship but each of which registers Anne's, and eventually even Wentworth's, ongoing physical awareness of and attraction for the other. These physical encounters dominate this portion of the novel in a way that would be impossible in an acknowledged courtship, where physical intimacy and sexual attraction tends to be necessarily obscured. (King 127)

Indeed, we should examine several casual silent physical contacts or accidental approaches of Wentworth and Anne in public through the novel, whether their relationship is good or bad. First, in spite of Mrs. Musgrove being sandwiched between Wentworth and Anne, "They were actually on the same sofa" (*P*, Ch. 8). As John Wiltshire acknowledges very truly about the importance of the scene, this is their first approach at very close range in the novel.[2] The point to observe is Wentworth's defiant reaction against Anne. Wentworth, who is offended with Anne, neither speaks nor turns his face to her. Mrs. Musgrove with "comfortable substantial size" (*P*, Ch. 8) is represented as a veritable "barrier" (*P*, Ch. 8) and Wentworth's distant attitude towards Anne.

There is one further approach that we must not ignore. As the story goes, Wentworth is "apparently not ill-disposed for conversation" (*P*, Ch. 9) and gradually exchanging words with Anne. Under the better conditions like this, Wentworth separates Anne from her nephew, Walter, who wraps himself around her neck and hinders her. Juliet McMaster praises this act as "the most powerful rescue scene" (McMaster 73). Wentworth approaches Anne from behind and accomplishes it ingeniously without even letting it be noticed. What is apparent in this quotation, "the silence in

2) "Since words are not exchanged, the physical settings in which they meet play an important role" (Wiltshire, "*Mansfield*" 79).

which it had passed" (*P*, Ch. 9), is that Wentworth does not utter a sound once again. However, we should notice his voluntary attitude when compared with the last approach. Wiltshire considers the unruly Walter as an "incarnation" (Wiltshire, "*Mansfield*" 79) of Wentworth's childish anger towards Anne and goes on to say: "His release of the boy thus figures as an initial movement towards his own relinquishment of a disabling psychological attitude" (Ibid. 79). However, Walter clings persistently to Anne, not Wentworth. Walter represents not only Wentworth's personal feelings; he should also be interpreted as a metaphor of the obstacle to be overcome between Wentworth and Anne. Wentworth's act implies that he desires and tries to straighten out the entanglement with Anne, and as a result, he puts it into action. Thus, the indirect obstacle which interrupts Wentworth and Anne disappears gradually as they re-establish their relationship.

What is more, Wentworth senses Anne's fatigue during the walk at Winthrop: ". . . without saying a word, turned to her, and quietly obliged her to be assisted into the carriage" (*P*, Ch. 10). The passage, "Captain Wentworth cleared the hedge in a moment to say something to his sister. —The something might be guessed by its effects" (*P*, Ch. 10), makes clear that he arranges the Croft's carriage for Anne in advance. As the narrator says, "his will and his hands had done it" (*P*, Ch. 10); this is Wentworth's voluntary act, just like the previous example. He can not help caring about her. However, there are other unprecedented points to note. Wentworth comes to approach Anne without hesitation in public, and moreover, their hands touch directly. In those days, there was a social decorum for the carriage between men and women as follows: ". . . he does not sit next to her unless he is her husband, brother, father, or son. He alights from the carriage first so he may hand her down" (Pool 54). They had to act according to the rules of getting on and off or seating, just as in dancing, and the assistance for women was one of the duties which was assigned to men. We should read more into Wentworth's behaviour than the decorum of gentlemen towards ladies. While he seemingly acts publicly in appearance, in fact, he does it on the basis of his personal view. Wentworth also keeps silence, as in the previous two approaches, but we have to inquire into the word, "turned to her". Wentworth, who has avoided and approached Anne from behind until now, veers strongly towards her. It is the metaphorical expression of his feeling that he is now confronted with Anne.

There is another illustration of the carriage. When Wentworth returns from Lyme Regis together with Anne and Henrietta, "He had handed them both in, and placed himself between them" (*P*, Ch. 12). Wentworth takes Anne by the hand again, gives her a ride in the carriage, and surprisingly, sits next to her. This act contrasts strongly with social rules about the carriage quoted above, for he is not a member of Anne's family, much less her "husband". In addition, Wentworth suddenly speaks to Anne "In a low, cautious voice" (*P*, Ch. 12) in the carriage as soon as Henrietta sleeps.

Wentworth intentionally keeps a next seat of Anne because he wants to speak only to Anne and seek her judgment with trust. In contrast to the hostile attitude or refusal at the pianoforte, we can accept that Wentworth boldly makes a physical approach to Anne. There are no more obstacles between them such as Mrs. Musgrove or Walter. The movement of dance at the ball in which men and women touch each other is reflected in a series of actions by Wentworth's relating to the carriage. From this viewpoint, although Wentworth does not dance with Anne, this is his rather negative approach to her in the process of his courtship.

As Wentworth comes into frequent contact with Anne and behaves naturally, the relationship between him and dance further strengthens. Wentworth and Anne attend together the concert in Bath. The following sentence, "Captain Wentworth was very fond of music" (*P*, Ch. 19), not only reveals his new interest. We can also find several of the same forms which are applied to the rules of dance in his behaviour. Wentworth and Anne socialize alone together at last in the situation as follows: "all the various noises of the room, the almost ceaseless slam of the door, and ceaseless buzz of persons walking through" (*P,* Ch. 20). Meanwhile, Austen lets Anne's cousin, Mr. Elliot, who is apparently a spotless gentleman but is in fact a selfish and designing strategist, interrupt Wentworth's conversation with Anne. They converse twice, and this is the same protocol as dance: "when a gentleman asked a lady to dance, he did so for two dances" (Olsen 199-200). At this concert, three main constituents of dance, that is, music, conversations and interruption by a third party, occur simultaneously. We can state that the form of dance can be applied further to the relationship between Wentworth and Anne. However, Wentworth leaves the room promptly, tearing himself away from Anne. This action is animated by his own private feeling: "Jealousy of Mr. Elliot had been the retarding weight, the doubt, the torment" (*P,* Ch. 23).[3] Wentworth ruins the party. Consequently, he has not danced with Anne yet.

Let us consider also the following quotation: "There could not be an objection. There could be only a most proper alacrity, a most obliging compliance for public view; and smiles reined in and spirits dancing in private rapture" (*P,* Ch. 23, emphasis mine). This extract shows Wentworth's feeling when he is asked to see Anne home. The first thing that one notices is that some terms of dance are used figuratively to express Wentworth's private rapture in public. It seems as if his offer of a dance is accepted and he actually dances with Anne. In addition, the narrator describes a walk after Wentworth's proposal is accepted by Anne as follows:

> And there, as they slowly paced the gradual ascent, heedless of every group around them, seeing neither sauntering politicians, bustling house-keepers, flirting girls, nor nursery-maids and children, they could indulge in those

3) McMaster finds that there is a change in Wentworth's feelings for Anne, especially jealousy: ". . . we can deduce Wentworth's feelings from his motions during the concert. . . . His irritable opinion that the music is bad and the gathering tedious is all due to the state of his emotions, his conviction that Elliot's chances with Anne are better than his" (McMaster 68).

> retrospections and acknowledgments, and especially in those explanations of what had directly preceded the present moment, which were so poignant and so ceaseless in interest. (*P*, Ch. 23)

Wentworth and Anne are totally absorbed in their conversation, with indifference to the noise of the surroundings. Mary F. Favret discovers the personal desires for their own world in this scene, as "The lovers experience something excessive and edenic, something inordinate and out of logical order. . . . In the intensity of their privacy, they are nearly silenced, or spirited away" (Favret 173). Janis P. Stout admires that Austen deliberately dissipates "the immediacy and the emotional impact of the proposal scene itself" (Stout 320) using indirect discourse, "brevity, passive verbs, generalization, and formal syntax" (Ibid. 320). The critics consider that this scene, in which they understand each other, is the most emotional one in this novel, though Austen does not write their actual conversations. These quotations point out the private relationship of Wentworth and Anne and their strong feelings lurking beneath their consciousness.

Austen makes Wentworth and Anne walk outdoors at the climax of the novel. They complete their own private world together, being entirely surrounded by the crowds in public. David Monaghan regards "The use of the dance metaphor" (Monaghan 86-7) as Anne's "effusively optimistic tone" (Ibid. 86) in getting engaged to the sea Captain Wentworth, despite suffering a certain amount of apprehension about the uncertain future. Monaghan certainly discovers Anne's rapture. This view is quite unsatisfactory because he neglects the all-important aspect of dance. We can not dance by ourselves. We need a partner of the other sex. Anne needs Wentworth, therefore, we should not point out only Anne's feelings. Wentworth, who actually likes dancing and music, can finally dance with his dearest Anne at the very end. It should be concluded that the form of dance is used effectively and metaphorically in order to express Wentworth's intimate feelings towards Anne.

II. The Conversation by Letter

Wentworth writes and gives a personal letter to someone special, just as Darcy did. We can read of "a direction hardly legible, to 'Miss A. E. —'" (*P*, Ch. 23) on the letter. Wentworth's handwriting completely differs from letters by mail, and moreover, we should notice the way he gives it. Wentworth, who is with Anne in the same room at White Hart, leaves, but he returns immediately to her and acts as follows:

> He begged their pardon, but he had forgotten his gloves, and instantly crossing the room to the writing table, and standing with his back towards Mrs. Musgrove, he drew out a letter from under the scattered paper, placed it before Anne with eyes of glowing entreaty fixed on her for a moment, and hastily collecting his gloves, was again out of the room, almost before

> Mrs. Musgrove was aware of his being in it—the work of an instant! (*P*, Ch. 23)

His sole purpose is to give the letter to Anne. That Wentworth's letter is "under the scattered paper" means he designs to return swiftly before someone detects it. Because Wentworth can not hand his letter openly to Anne, who is neither his fiancé nor lover at this moment, he devises a strategy of telling her secretly. In other words, this is an intentional act, an ingenious attempt.

The content of the letter is as passionate as can be:

> I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own, than when you almost broke it eight years and a half ago. Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. (*P*, Ch. 23)

Wentworth writes frankly of his intense feelings towards Anne. Norman Page regards this letter as "the most fervent declaration of love in the Austen canon" (Page 53) and Susan Pepper Robbins observes "It functions as an 'affective gesture'" (Robbins 128-9). Both of them interpret the letter as the means for the expression of Wentworth's innermost feelings. Wentworth himself uses "love" definitely. Namely, he conveys ardent love through the letter. We can read the whole of his letter. It is not the record or self-justification of the past like Darcy's one but a confession of his love at the moment of writing. As the narrator states, "Of what he had then written, nothing was to be retracted or qualified" (*P,* Ch. 23). This letter demonstrates his sincerity. "Wentworth's letter shocks like a thunderclap" (Favret 166), as Favret puts it. His exceptionally private letter shatters the calm of this novel.

We have to examine the wide difference between Wentworth and Darcy, that is to say, Austen describes minutely the process of Wentworth's writing. Wentworth sits and begins to write the letter at the side while Anne speaks with Captain Harville about the feelings of men and women. Wentworth drops his pen unconsciously in the middle of their discussion. Favret, who notes the importance of this act, states, "Some message is forcing its way through the noise. . . . He has, with that gesture, entered into her conversation, into her very language" (Favret 167). Tony Tanner considers this scene as the "most quietly dramatic and loaded incident" (Tanner 241). They appreciate the significance of the minutest event. In fact, Anne hears the sound of dropping and consequently notices that Wentworth sits beside her closer than she had imagined. She keeps on speaking after recognizing his existence, and Wentworth continues to write the letter while listening to what Anne says. That is, Wentworth's writing and Anne's conversation with Harville move at the same time. The following remark, "he had seized a sheet of paper, and poured out his feelings" (*P*, Ch. 23),

means that Wentworth is impelled by strong passion and begins to write on impulse. Although they do not talk face to face with each other, the drop of the pen acts as a trigger for their "unvoiced communication" (Tanner 241).

Joseph M. Duffy refers to the fact that Wentworth and Anne converse with each other in public, and moreover, they do not talk directly but hear indirectly in most cases. He acutely points out that the true concerned parties are Wentworth and Anne in the scene above: "Here the nexus of the dialogue is ostensibly between the two [Anne and Harville] conversationalist; actually it is between Anne and Wentworth, who sits nearby listening" (Duffy 287). It is entirely fair to say that the technique Austen successfully applies is 'dramatic irony'. Wentworth and Anne do not share a mutual understanding at that instant. Anne insists to Harville that women's gift "is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone" (*P*. Ch. 23), while Wentworth writes his lasting thought to her alone. This situation is emotional competition between them. What has to be noticed is Wentworth's attitude. He writes "I can listen no longer" and "I can hardly write" (*P*, Ch. 23) in the letter. He never says a single word while writing, after dropping his pen and at the time of his returning. As Wentworth writes "I must speak", however, he "speaks" his sincere feeling to Anne through the letter. If only we turn our attention to Wentworth's behaviour in this scene, we can fully understand his personal feelings.

There is something worthy of special mention in the writing of *Persuasion*. Austen rewrote the last two chapters, and this is the only novel in which the original manuscripts remain.[4)] There are no scenes of Anne's conversations with Harville and of Wentworth's writing of the letter in the manuscripts. Wentworth and Anne only have a "powerful dialogue" (*P* 258), and "They were re-united" (Ibid. 258), that's all. The decline of Austen's health may have affected the writing more or less, however, we can not read their conversation about the past or self-recognition in the final chapter.[5)] On 13 March 1817, Austen sent a letter to Fanny and wrote about *Persuasion* as follows: "I have a something ready for Publication, which may perhaps appear about a twelvemonth hence" (Le Faye 333). The first manuscript of *Persuasion* was completed in July 1816. Considering the date, it is likely that Austen felt the incompletion and need for improvement. Consequently, it is Wentworth's writing of the letter that Austen finally adds. She changes the final scene into the situation in which Wentworth tries to convey his passion silently in public. J. E. Austen-Leigh praises this new retelling as supreme: "Perhaps she has seldom written anything more brilliant" (J. E. Austen-Leigh 125). Page also notes Austen's masterly stylistic corrections on the narrative and the constructive of sentences.[6)] Most of us would accept

4) The original manuscripts appeared in "*A Memoir of Jane Austen*" for the first time, and we can read them as Chapter 10 of "The Cancelled Chapter" in *The Works of Jane Austen* (Vol. V) edited by R. W. Chapman.
5) Austen ended her days on 18 July 1817. It is assumed that she suffered from Addison's disease.

that there are no criticisms against the rewriting and it touches us to the heart.[7)]

The public situation is especially noteworthy in the case of Austen's rewriting. Tanner points out Wentworth's letter concerning the private and public as follows:

> It is the desperate calligraphy of the heart—written under pressure and social constraints. . . . For this speech-writing is not done according to prescribed formulae or convention: it is an 'exceptional' writing which seeks to find a way through all the restraining and silencing rules and codes to communicate directly to the chosen woman. (Tanner 242)

Wentworth behaves politely and does not interrupt the conversation between Anne and Harville. Austen depicts dramatically their private feelings in public, the difficulty of communication in such a place, and considerable emotional impact on the receiver by involving Wentworth, Anne and other characters simultaneously. Wentworth's letter is absolutely indispensable to enliven the private relationship in a society which requires morals and manners which Austen esteems highly.

As we have mentioned before, Austen shows all the details of Wentworth's behaviour. The main reason is that the past of Wentworth and Anne is closely connected. They, who have misunderstood each other since the dissolution of their engagement, are finally present in the same room. This is the golden opportunity for Wentworth, who listens to Anne's inmost thoughts and realizes clearly his own feeling to propose marriage to her again. Because there is not a moment to be lost, Wentworth must prepare himself for it. Practically, it is his last chance, and at the same time, the crisis of his life. Wentworth gambles with his fate as a man. His writing of the letter reflects the awkward position as the last sentence shows: "I must go, uncertain of my fate; but I shall return hither, or follow your party, as soon as possible. A word, a look will be enough to decide whether I enter your father's house this evening, or never" (*P*, Ch. 23). What has to be noticed is that Wentworth does not impose his opinion on Anne one-sidedly, differing from Darcy. He is concerned about Anne's reaction and desires her reply after consideration. Wentworth's future hinges upon Anne. This letter is the key to heal the time, the great distance between the two and the insecure relationship.

Let us consider Anne's reaction when she reads Wentworth's letter. It gives her an inexpressible shock: "The revolution which one instant had made in Anne, was almost beyond expression" (*P*, Ch. 23). Anne sits in the same chair in which Wentworth sat and wrote the letter a little while ago, and reads it alone. His private letter, "a silent utterance, more powerful than speech" (Robbins 140), appeals profoundly to Anne's heart of hearts, raising a silent voice. This applies perfectly to Austen's maxim on letter writing:

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6) "The effect of the first-person form, combined with the shorter sentences, is to provide an increase in tempo which the author rightly judged to be necessary at this point in the scene" (Page 52).

7) B. C. Southam (Southam 93), A. Walton Litz (Litz 156-60) and Marylin Butler (Butler 281-2) note Austen's incomparable writing skills and magnificent depictions of characters' emotions in this scene.

> I have now attained the true art of letter-writing, which we are always told, is to express on paper exactly what one would say to the same person by word of mouth; I have been talking to you almost as fast as I could the whole of this letter. (Le Faye 68)

In addition, the content of letter matches Anne's ideal image closely: "the frank, the open-hearted, the eager character beyond all others. Warmth and enthusiasm did captivate her still" (*P*, Ch. 17). This view is completely opposite to Mr. Elliot who "was not open. There was never any burst of feeling, any warmth of indignation or delight" (*P*, Ch. 17). His character can be found in the letter to Mrs. Smith for whom he flatly refuses to act as executor. Each letter corresponds exactly with each character. After Anne finishes reading Wentworth's letter, she feels "overpowering happiness" (*P*, Ch. 23). Thus, Anne is convinced that Wentworth is her ideal man, of his deep affection for her, and above all, that she herself has the same affection for him.

Generally speaking, we correspond with people who live far off. It is unnatural for Wentworth to write letters because he is close to Anne. But, we must not forget that his proposal of marriage was rejected once. Wentworth is conscious that there is no other way to plan some strategy for the purpose of communicating with Anne. Brown remarks how the letters operate: "The true art of letter writing is not simply a communicative technique. It is also a complex experience of feeling and insights, through which individual perception and human relationships are defined" (Brown 167). The purpose of this quotation is to show that the writing of a letter reflects not only various emotions but also the human relationship between the sender and receiver. It means that Wentworth's letter, which is written by impulse and given intentionally, represents the uncontrollable feeling of love and the complicated relationship with Anne. He earnestly desires to convey his real intention somehow in public. Shortly afterwards, Wentworth talks with Anne personally and asks her to marry in the open air. This proposal is accepted by Anne, who had gotten a profound shock in silence. The letter from Wentworth moves Anne greatly, as strongly as his voice. All these things make it clear that Wentworth's letter is a most effective means in the process of his courtship not only in expressing his emotions towards Anne, but also in mending their relationship.

III. Wentworth's Cowardly Propose

Wentworth, who is characterized as a vigorous and sanguine hero, seems to be aggressive about marriage. As the narrator says, "It was now his object to marry" (*P*, Ch. 7). Wentworth himself asserts this to his sister, Sophia, shortly after his reunion with Anne.

> Yes, here I am, Sophia, quite ready to make a foolish match. Any body between fifteen and thirty may have me for asking. A little beauty, and a

> few smiles, and a few compliments to the navy, and I am a lost man. Should not this be enough for a sailor, who has had no society among women to make him nice? (*P*, Ch. 7)

There are certainly some heroes in Austen's six novels who admire the heroine's figures, such as Darcy, Mr. Knightley (*E*) and Edmund Bertram (*MP*) when he is impressed by the elegantly-dressed Fanny Price. Wentworth is the only hero that professes his view of marriage or 'wife-hunting' among them. In fact, he fraternizes with the Musgrove sisters, especially the older sister, the twenty year old Louisa.[8] However, Wentworth does not reveal his real intention. As the words "Anne Elliot was not out of his thoughts, when he more seriously described the woman he should wish to meet with" (*P,* Ch. 7) show, Wentworth can not erase her from his mind.

Wiltshire describes Wentworth as "a man of action and energy, trenchant convictions, strong and impulsive feelings that often take him to the verge of tactlessness, but little self-questioning or self-doubt" (Wiltshire, "*Mansfield*" 78). However, we see, as suggested in "I have thought on the subject more than most men" (*P*, Ch. 7), that Wentworth wonders about marriage or his ideal woman in his own way. On the one hand, he is enthusiastic about hunting for young ladies as a marriage partner, but on the other hand, he uses the words "foolish match". Wentworth does not consider seriously marriage to Louisa at all; in fact, he tries to distance himself, feeling a sense of crisis like duty after her accident. In short, Wentworth can not imagine marriage to anyone except Anne. Yet he is still so angry that he can not consider her as a marriage partner. What is more, Wentworth is not even conscious that the criterion for judging his marriage partner is Anne. His views of love or marriage are formed indirectly and unconsciously through the past experience with Anne.

Wentworth gives the example of a nut and talks to Louisa about a strong and firm person, without knowing Anne is listening.

> "It is the worst evil of too yielding and indecisive a character, that no influence over it can be depended on.—You are never sure of a good impression being durable. Every body may sway it; let those who would be happy be firm.—Here is a nut," said he, catching one down from an upper bough. "To exemplify,—a beautiful glossy nut, which, blessed with original strength, has outlived all the storms of autumn. Not a puncture, not a weak spot any where.—This nut," he continued, with playful solemnity, —"while so many of its brethren have fallen and been trodden under foot, is still in possession of all the happiness that a hazel-nut can be supposed capable of." Then, returning to his former earnest tone: "My first wish for all, whom I am interested in, is that they should be firm." (*P*, Ch. 10)

8) Laurence Lerner observes that Wentworth is the most obstinate hero among Austen's heroes. Lerner says "Wentworth's thoughtlessness almost gets him engaged to a girl he does not love" (Lerner 168) comparing him with the sensible Mr. Knightley, though he regards Wentworth the most attractive hero owing to this fault.

Butler points out the strong connotations in Wentworth's speech:

> Captain Wentworth's praise of the beauty of the nut, his symbol for hidden richness, perfection, and strength, suggests an intelligent, attractive, witty man, of high moral aspirations; but at the same time a man who is in the grip of strongly subjective frame of mind, a personal bias which perverts his judgement. (Butler 278)

Although Butler finds two conflicting connotations and Wentworth's warped self-consciousness, the details are vague. After pointing out that "He is the first hero since Henry Tilney with a sense of humor, an active imagination, and a talent for making metaphors" (Sieferman 284), Sylvia Sieferman suggests that Wentworth uses the nut to "disguise" (Ibid. 284) his real intentions. We can be fairly certain that the nut reflects his character. But, Wentworth plucks the nut abruptly. It is worthwhile examining his behaviour to the nut.

Wentworth never accepts weakness and needs a "character of decision and firmness" (*P*, Ch. 10) in order to be happy. He has the theory that people are not confused by their surroundings, carry out their ways spotlessly, and feel happy, provided they are strong. Wentworth decided for himself his first proposal of marriage towards Anne and joined the navy without hesitation. As a result, he braved a storm like the brilliant durable nut, was promoted to Captain and returned with a large fortune. Bernard J. Paris argues *Persuasion* stresses the importance of personal exertions for discretion, voluntary will or romance, and he goes on to say: "Wentworth is the most dashing of Austen's heroes, and his confidence in his ability to master fate is justified by events" (Paris 142). It is obvious that Wentworth is a man who puts his ideas into practice. Nevertheless, he plucks off the nut, which ought to possess happiness, namely, he forcibly harms the firm and successful nut. Kenneth L. Moler reads Wentworth's thoughts on the past into this speech: "The most detailed expression of Wentworth's views on the broken engagement . . . occurs during his conversation with Louisa Musgrove during the 'long walk' to Winthrop" (Moler 210). Indeed, Wentworth's movement accords with his past situation. Anne's unexpected rejection is unfortunate for Wentworth who "had always been lucky" (*P*, Ch. 4). He can not surmount the objection to Anne's motive, that is, the fact that Anne was persuaded to give up the marriage by Lady Russell. Wentworth, however, does not admit his mistake. He feels that the blame rests with Anne and Lady Russell. Wentworth just reproaches Anne for her weakness or passive obedience and misinterprets Louisa's strong will. He implies his subjective view as a victim in his behaviour, in which his

9) Austen visited Lyme with family in November 1803 and September 1804. She sent letters to Cassandra and says, "We afterwards walked together for an hour on the Cobb" (Le Faye 94). We can read vivid and detailed descriptions of the place from these letters, so it can be concluded that Austen used her real experience to advantage in the novel. Furthermore, Austen writes about a comfortable stay, weather or balls. Some pleasant events at Lyme must have made a favorable impression on Austen. This point is argued by R. A. Austen-Leigh in *Jane Austen and Lyme Regis* in detail.

happiness is ruined by Anne's rejection under external pressure.

Let us consider two events at Lyme Regis.[9] Here is a major turning point for Wentworth, because there are signs of the re-establishment of his relationship with Anne, hinted at in the following passage: "From the Lyme episode onward a number of fortuitous circumstances occur which move the obstacles to Anne's reunion with Wentworth" (Paris 141).[10] Wentworth realizes Anne's two attractions again. First, he notices Mr. Elliot looking at Anne with "a degree of earnest admiration" (*P*, Ch. 12), and then Wentworth turns his eyes to her. The narrator states Wentworth's feeling in free indirect speech: "'That man is struck with you, —and even I, at this moment, see something like Anne Elliot again.'" (*P*, Ch. 12). Duffy regards this description as an intentional one: "This mirror device by which feelings and ideas are refracted rather than expressed directly is used through the novel to record the progress of the relationship between Anne and Wentworth" (Duffy 285).[11] It was not until after his reunion with Anne that he is impressed by her attractive appearance which recovers "the bloom and freshness of youth" (*P*, Ch. 12). Professor Hisamori makes several important statements on detailed physical descriptions of female characters in Austen's novel. She observes that Anne's "bloom and freshness of youth" is exchanged silently among the eyes of the three, in other words, it is the subject of conversation of their eyes (Hisamori 15). In brief, each countenance mirrors each feeling towards a person in his or her heart. We can read Wentworth's change of feeling towards Anne from "a glance of brightness" (*P*, Ch. 12), too. Anne can not but notice that Mr. Elliot gazes at her. If anything, we can find Anne's passive attitude and the two men's active ones. The important point to note, however, is that Wentworth is the only man that looks at the two except himself. It means that the main stress falls on Wentworth more than Anne and Mr. Elliot. Wentworth begins to feel the sexual attraction towards Anne as a woman and uneasiness towards Mr. Elliot as a man.[12] Wentworth realizes these feelings not from Anne directly but from Mr. Elliot's expression, indirectly.

Secondly, when Wentworth experiences the accident with Louisa, who falls on the

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10) Laura G. Mooneyham also argues this point, pointing out the differences in behaviour: "Lyme is the structural centre of the novel because it marks the point at which Anne's and Wentworth's roles begin to reserve. Anne becomes more active, Wentworth more passive. Anne grows into a new confidence; Wentworth loses much of his bravado. Anne speaks up; Wentworth's speeches diminish in fluency and quantity" (Mooneyham 170).

11) Duffy further points out Austen's powerful technique for expressing feelings in *Persuasion*: "By handling her material so indirectly, Miss Austen avoids the danger of sentimentality latent in such a love problem. The lovers are shown scenically in a tangential rather than a direct relationship with each other. Since they are almost always together in company, their emotions are part of a community of emotion, and the two draw close to each other in sympathetic feeling away from the community, or one merges with the common emotion and leaves the other isolated. Through dramatic visualization their feelings, which may be simple, awakened, or changed, are immediately comprehended" (Duffy 285-6).

12) When Wentworth meets Mr. Elliot again at the inn right after that, his reaction is speedy: "'Ah!' cried Captain Wentworth, instantly, and with half a glance at Anne; 'it is the very man we passed.'" (P, Ch.12). Wentworth identifies Mr. Elliot first and tries to get his name. It is certain that he is concerned with his rival in love.

pavement on the Lower Cobb, his attitude is hardly imaginable. Wentworth does not only pale and feel "agony of silence" (*P*, Ch. 12) but also is very confused and needs help: "'Is there no one to help me?' were the first words which burst from Captain Wentworth, in a tone of despair, and as if all his own strength were gone" (*P*, Ch. 12). This may have been the subject of controversy. Wiltshire regards Wentworth's behaviour as strange one comparing his previous bravery as a naval officer (Wiltshire, *Jane* 171). Tanner also finds an exceptional attitude, differing from any other hero in Austen's novels: "These are unusual words from a Jane Austen hero. He is not omni-competent and once again all eyes turn to Anne for advice and direction" (Tanner 234). We surely can not imagine Wentworth's bravery as Captain from the cry of "bitterest agony" (*P*, Ch. 12). In contrast, Anne alone faces the situation philosophically and takes all the initiative in nursing, encouragement and relief. Wentworth asks her for advice and states plainly, ". . . if Anne will stay, no one so proper, so capable as Anne!" (*P*, Ch. 12).

In addition to his trust towards Anne, we should not overlook one change in his speech, that is, he calls her first name "Anne" not "Miss Elliot". In *Sense and Sensibility*, Marianne and Willoughby are blamed because they call each other's name in spite of not being engaged. It is an unforgivable conduct of unmarried couple at that time. Regardless of this fact, Wentworth calls her Anne, though she is not his fiancé. It means that Wentworth has stepped back into eight years ago when he was on first name terms with Anne. As "he recollected himself" (*P*, Ch. 12) right after this revelation, Wentworth, who is terribly shocked and shaken by Louisa's accident, remembers his past unconsciously and experiences the same attitude. It is a change in his attitude that even Anne perceives: "gentleness, which seemed almost restoring the past" (*P*, Ch. 12). The relationship between Wentworth and Anne re-establishes itself gradually. Furthermore, Wentworth realizes Anne's inner worth for her "steadiness of principle" (*P*, Ch. 23) and "resolution of a collected mind" (*P*, Ch. 23), and understands her real intention in being persuaded by Lady Russell in the past. But, we must not forget that Wentworth also recognizes these things indirectly from Louisa's accident, differing from Darcy who feels Elizabeth's attraction directly from the association or conversations with her.

At Bath, where Wentworth meets Anne again after the trip to Lyme, we can observe his unnatural behaviour towards Anne. When he unexpectedly encounters Anne, "He was more obviously struck and confused by the sight of her, than she had ever observed before" (*P*, Ch. 19). Even Anne senses his "embarrassment" (*P*, Ch. 19). It is "common subjects" (*P*, Ch. 19) that Wentworth manages to address to her. This formal courtesy demonstrates that Wentworth restrains his personal emotions. We can read it from his conversations with Anne at the concert. Wentworth formerly admired the emotionalism of Benwick, who continued to love his fiancé ardently within her lifetime and after her death.[13] Therefore, Wentworth is stupefied by the fact

Benwick changes his mind and gets engaged to Louisa easily: "A man does not recover from such a devotion of the heart such a woman!—He ought not—he does not" (*P*, Ch. 20). As Brown analyzes cleverly, Wentworth's speech mentioned above means that his view of love is different from Benwick's.[14] Wentworth can not understand Benwick's recovery; namely, it is Wentworth that does not overcome his anguish of the past, and still loves his one and only woman, Anne. As Anne feels Wentworth's "tenderness of the past" (*P*, Ch. 20) and affection from his behaviour, he brings up the topic of their past. Wentworth recalls that Anne was not a card-player, and above all, speaks clearly of the time when they first met and brought off an engagement: "'It is a period, indeed! Eight years and a half is a period!'" (P, Ch. 22). The time he says is very exact. The topics ascend to the past and increase the personal bonds between them. It means that Wentworth's feelings towards Anne go back to those days, and it is so strong that he shows it in his attitude.

We should not overlook that Anne speaks to Wentworth in most cases. While Anne acts on her own initiative, Wentworth, as the line "he seemed in no hurry to leave her" (*P*, Ch. 20) shows, is still next to her even after their conversations stop. But now, although their eyes meet clearly, "He did not seem to want to be near enough for conversation" (*P*, Ch. 22). Later, Wentworth explains the reason for coming Bath as follows: "Within the first five minutes I said, 'I will be at Bath on Wednesday,' and I was" (*P,* Ch. 23). As soon as Wentworth hears the engagement of Louisa and Benwick, he resolves to visit Bath, where Anne stays, for the purpose of meeting her. This is similar to the situations of Henry Tilney and Edward Ferrars, who visit heroines' house suddenly to propose. However, Wentworth has only "some degree of hope" (*P*, Ch. 23). He is not confident of Anne's feeling, differing from the two heroes above. That is, Wentworth does not visit Anne of his own accord but acts under the inspiration of Louisa's engagement. Paris finds out one obstacle in the relationship between Wentworth and Anne: "Once Wentworth is released from Louisa, the only real problem to be solved is that of communication" (Paris 146). Relevant to this point is Mooneyham's following remark:

> They are impeded primarily by Wentworth himself, who erects one obstacle of language after another between himself and Anne. The primary barrier between Wentworth and Anne is linguistic. For though Wentworth is highly skillful with language, this skill diminishes markedly in those areas

13) "Captain Wentworth believed it impossible for man to be more attached to woman than poor Benwick had been to Fanny Harville, or to be more deeply afflicted under the dreadful change" (*P*, Ch. 11).

14) Brown investigates Wentworth's compassion for Benwick, who is disappointed in love, and embarrassment at not understanding the excess of his feeling as follows: "When Captain Wentworth expresses surprise at Benwick's sudden recovery from Fanny Harville's death, he does so in the familiar rhetoric of sentimentality. . . . In one sense, the exclamation is genuinely emotive, for it recaptures the intensity of Benwick's bereavement. But the suggestive extravagance of the images is static, for it underlines Wentworth's characteristically rigid and extreme views on emotional or moral stability. He cannot understand how Benwick's sorrow could evolve and eventually give away to new interests—such as marriage with Louisa Musgrove" (Brown 61).

which apply to his own inner drama about Anne. (Mooneyham 166)

As suggested here, Wentworth can not demonstrate his skill of communication in the relationship with Anne. He is characterized as a brilliant speaker and tries to enliven the atmosphere in the first part of the novel. Sieferman recognizes that Wentworth "is able, at least when his ego is uninvolved, to make fine distinctions about the feelings of other people, and to adapt himself to them" (Sieferman 284), as it were, a reasonable person with courtesy. When Wentworth is spoken to by Anne at the concert, he answers happily and joins conversations. But now, his surroundings control his feelings. Wentworth can not but mask his emotions, nor can he behave naturally, with composure. Although Wentworth actually wants to talk to Anne, he can not approach her voluntarily. As we have seen, he leaves the room at the concert; he can not even endure to see Anne with Mr. Elliot. Once Wentworth realizes her value and regrets the past fettered by "the pride, the folly, the madness of resentment" (*P*, Ch. 23), he can not adopt a progressive attitude. Wentworth, who ought to be strong, hesitates, in fact, he escapes from the love relationship with Anne.

Some cases of Wentworth's behaviour being influenced indirectly, which have already discussed fully in earlier parts of this chapter, connect with the proposal to Anne. Wentworth proposes marriage to Anne again while they are alone together in the outdoors. This situation, a favorite trick of Austen's, is explained as follows:

> There they exchanged again those feelings and those promises which had once before seemed to secure every thing, but which had been followed by so many, many years of division and estrangement. There they returned again into the past, more exquisitely happy, perhaps, in their re-union, than when it had been first projected; more tender, more tried, more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth, and attachment; more equal to act, more justified in acting. (*P*, Ch. 23)

The narrator states that Wentworth and Anne are worthy to marry because they overcome "division and estrangement" and understand each other perfectly in comparison with the past. However, there is one noteworthy difference in his courtship process among other Austen's heroes. Wentworth's proposal has two stages, that is to say, he gives a letter to Anne for the purpose of expressing his feelings just before his actual offer of marriage by mouth. This pattern is exactly the same as has always existed between the two in the past and present. It is not until Wentworth looks at Anne's positive reaction that his "cheeks which had been pale now glowed, and the movements which had hesitated were decided" (*P*, Ch. 23). Wentworth, who is full of anxiety about the future, conveys the background of his passions through the letter. After giving the letter in advance and confirming her feeling, he can finally propose marriage with relief. Wentworth does not have sufficient courage to hear Anne's reply directly. In other words, the scenes of his indirect self-recognition given so far are the foreshadowing of the climax, his proposal. Wentworth's two

stages of courtship demonstrate a cowardice in which he can not adapt his fixed idea about strength of character to the relationship with Anne.

The following is Wentworth's proposal eight years ago:

> They were gradually acquainted, and when acquainted, rapidly and deeply in love. It would be difficult to say which had seen highest perfection in the other, or which had been the happiest; she, in receiving his declarations and proposals, or he in having them accepted. (*P*, Ch. 4, emphasis mine)

Both Wentworth and Anne have no faults. They are absolutely perfect in their appearance, conditions for marriage and emotions. This is an exceptional description for Austen who says "pictures of perfection as you know make me sick & wicked" (Le Faye 335). Many critics explore the fact that Wentworth is a hero who experiences self-discovery. Although they perceive the process, they discuss most of his behaviour depicted from the view point of Anne.[15] Ann W. Astell, who asserts that *Persuasion* is the story of Anne's romance, regards only the process of Anne's development. She regards the marriage as "an outward sign, a symbol, of the integrity Anne has achieved within herself" (Astell 285). We noted earlier, however, there are some scenes in which Wentworth is the central character. It is certain that we can perceive every feeling or change in him. Through these descriptions, Austen reveals a new aspect of Wentworth, that he is not a perfect hero, and that he hesitates about his love with Anne. Finally, Wentworth acknowledges that the enemy of his past is "My own self" (*P*, Ch. 23) and absorbs lessons: "I must endeavour to subdue my mind to my fortune. I must learn to brook being happier than I deserve" (*P*, Ch. 23). Wentworth views himself objectively and learns flexibility in his thought and behaviour. Austen allows Wentworth to marry Anne when he accepts his own faults and repents of his foolishness of the past. Sir Walter and Lady Russell, who took a negative attitude or misunderstood their relationship, finally bless the marriage. The symbolic title, *Persuasion*, does not only mean that which is exerted by Lady Russell towards Anne, but also represents Wentworth's. In the process of his courtship towards Anne, we can read his self-recognition which acquires "advantage of maturity of mind, consciousness of right" (*P*, Ch. 24), that is, from the persuasion that is effected indirectly by various mediums to the one accomplished directly by himself.

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15) On this subject, Howard S. Babb interprets the process as follows: "The essential drama of the story arises from Captain Wentworth's slowly altering feelings toward Anne and resides in the gradual drawing together of hero and heroine. He is, in fact, the only character in the novel who undergoes any change. And for the most part we see him, as we see the other figures and events in *Persuasion*, from the perspective of a heroine who never changes fundamentally" (Babb 204). The next quotation is given by Mary Lascelles: "Its principal pattern is formed by the change in Wentworth's feelings towards Anne; and of the progress of this change we are allowed to judge only from a train of incidents which comes under her observation" (Lascellas 203). Furthermore, although Desmond MacCarthy praises the construction of *Persuasion* as 'unity of effect', the critics find that all of the story that develops from the viewpoint of Anne and Wentworth's behaviour is based on her subjective judgment or feelings (MacCarthy 391).

Conclusion

Austen chooses a common and universal matter as her material, love and marriage between men and women. She describes the psychology or behaviour of the fictional characters in minute detail. We can see her incomparable talents such as insight into society or gentry life at that time, a sharp sense of irony or humour, and the free indirect speech from the heroes. In their courtship processes, though there is similarity among heroes, Austen makes use of dance and letters with strict social decorum to distinguish each hero's characterization, human relationship and place in the novel.

In *Persuasion*, Wentworth, who is full of confidence, does not dance with Anne. However, his inner feelings, like anger about the past or jealousy, are well represented in his behaviour at the ball or concert. There are also some analogies of dance. Austen has Wentworth make physical contact with Anne and has them walk together outdoors to show his private feelings, as if they were dancing in public. For Wentworth, it is one of the means to communicate to Anne. Furthermore, Wentworth writes and gives a letter to Anne secretly. The content, handwriting and form of the letter differ entirely from public ones. His letter is the last resort to convey his personal feelings. It helps not only Anne's self-recognition but also recovers their relationship, and, above all, becomes the direct means of his proposal.

Wentworth overestimates his own strength and assumes that Anne is a woman of weak character. However, we can find his new aspect in the process of his courtship. Some indirect influence by surroundings and the two stages of his proposal disclose his cowardice. After the second proposal is accepted, Wentworth persuades himself of his own past obstinacy. Austen conveys the reality of a man who experiences frustration or humiliation in two proposals, and the title means his reformation. Wentworth undergoes such internal development as discouragement, confusion and self-recognition. He is a man of great humanity rather than a perfect marriage partner. It is no exaggeration to say that the story is about Wentworth. The title relates and reveals his characterization through the courtship process. It should be concluded, from what has been said above, that Wentworth is an indispensable character. We can truly appreciate Austen's literary greatness through Wentworth.

In *Persuasion*, Austen uses dance and letter writing more cleverly. Compared to Edward Ferrars and Colonel Brandon, who also do not dance with the heroines, the scenes of dances or balls in *Persuasion* not only show Wentworth's inner thoughts but also present an analogy for his outward behaviour. They dramatize his subtle feelings. In addition, Austen depicts the whole situation of Wentworth's letter in more detail than in Darcy's one. She adds Wentworth's complete behaviour and reaction in the writing of the letter. These descriptions create a complicated plot, a quiet tension and vitality in this most peaceful romantic novel. We are convinced fully of Austen's mature skills of writing in the autumn of her life by the depictions of the hero,

Wentworth.

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